

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 OMB-01 NIC-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EA-06

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R 031753Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8843

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT BY SOVIET TRADE UNION LEADER

SETS OFF NUMEROUS PROTESTS IN THE UK

1. BEGIN SUMMARY - NEWS REPORTS FROM GENEVA, WHICH
INDICATE THAT THE LONG-AWAITED VISIT TO THE UK BY THE
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SOVIET TRADE UNION DELEGATION, INCLUDING ALEXANDER

SHELEPIN, AUCCTU HEAD AND FORMER KGB CHIEF, MAY MATERIALIZES IN APRIL HAS BEGUN TO SET OFF A NUMBER OF LOUD REVERBERATIONS IN THIS COUNTRY. SHARP PROTESTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN VOICED BY LABOR AND CONSERVATIVE MPS, JEWISH GROUPS, AND OTHERS - AND SOME MPS ARE EXPECTED TO RAISE QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT ABOUT THE VISIT. END SUMMARY

2. THE FOCUS OF THESE PROTESTS CENTERS ON SHELEPIN AND HIS KGB BACKGROUND. THE "DAILY MAIL," FOR EXAMPLE, HAS A BANNER HEADLINE IN TODAY'S ISSUE (MARCH 3) ENTITLED: "KEEP THIS MAN OUT OF BRITAIN," REFERRING TO HIM AS THE "NOTORIOUS SECRET POLICEMAN -- HEAD OF THE KGB FROM 1958 TO 1961..." AND, IN A FEATURE ARTICLE AS: "THE MOST FEARED MAN IN ALL RUSSIA." THE "DAILY MAIL" ARTICLE CITES SEVERAL DARK DEEDS PERPETRATED IN THE UK AND IN THE SOVIET UNION WHEN SHELEPIN WAS HEAD OF THE KGB. A NUMBER OF OTHER LONDON NEWSPAPERS ALSO FEATURE THE PROSPECTIVE VISIT OF THE SOVIET DELEGATION, INCLUDING THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH," WHICH STATES THAT CONSERVATIVE MPS ARE EXPECTED TO ASK THE GOVERNMENT WHETHER IT PLANS TO GRANT A VISA TO SHELEPIN. PARTICIPANTS AT A CONSERVATIVE CONFERENCE OVER THE WEEKEND PASSED AN EMERGENCY MOTION CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO DENY SUCH A REQUEST. (OUR CHECKS WITH THE FCO INDICATE THAT SHELEPIN HAS NOT YET MADE APPLICATION, BUT THAT THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN MOSCOW WAS INFORMED BY ONE OF SHELEPIN'S STAFF THAT HE PLANS TO DO SO. TUC INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT HEAD, ALAN HARGREAVES, CONTINUES TO EXPECT SHELEPIN TO HEAD THE DELEGATION, BUT HE POINTS OUT THAT THE DECISION ABOUT WHOM TO SEND IS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE AUCCTU.)

3. PROTESTS OVER THE PROJECTED VISIT ARE MOUNTING. THE WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN FOR SOVIET JEWRY PROMISED TO "ORGANIZE A MASSIVE PROTEST TO MAKE THE TUC SEE SENSE." PETER HAIN A FORMER YOUNG LIBERAL LEADER, SAYS HE PLANS TO SUPPORT DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE VISIT AS WELL. MAURICE EDELMAN, LABOR MP AND INTERNATIONALLY-KNOWN NOVELIST, DECLARED THAT SHELEPIN REMAINS A KGB MAN. BRIAN WALDEN, ANOTHER LABOR MP, CALLS SHELEPIN A "PARTICULARLY ODIIOUS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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KIND OF A LEADER." A NUMBER OF OTHER LABOR MPS INCLUDING

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GRENVILLE JANNER, PAUL ROSE, AND TOM BRADLEY (WHO IS ALSO PRESIDENT OF THE TUC AFFILIATE, THE TRANSPORT AND SALARIED STAFFS ASSOCIATION - TSSA) HAVE ALSO ATTACKED THE TUC INVITATION. CONSERVATIVE CRITICS IN PARLIAMENT INCLUDE WILLIAM CLARK, WHO COMPARED EXCLUSION OF PEOPLE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH WITH AN INVITATION TO A "KGB MAN, TRADE UNION BRANCH, (WHO) IS ALLOWED IN..." AND PETER

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WALKER, FORMER CONSERVATIVE SHADOW DEFENSE SPOKESMAN WHO
ASKED, "DON'T THEY KNOW WHO THIS MAN IS AND WHAT HE
STANDS FOR?"

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FORMER TUC GENERAL SECRETARY,
GEORGE WOODCOCK, DEFENDED THE INVITATION. WOODCOCK
ARGUED THAT "THE BENEFITS OF THE VISIT WILL OUTWEIGH ANY
DISTASTE FOR THE MAN." AND LEFT-WING TUC GENERAL COUNCIL
MEMBER, ALLEN SAPPER (WHO ALSO HEADS THE CINEMATOGRAF
AND TELEVISION TECHNICIANS' UNION), ASKED: "WHERE WAS ALL
THE FUSS WHEN KISSINGER CAME TO THIS COUNTRY? HE HAS
ALL THE BLOOD OF VIETNAM ON HIS HANDS..."

5. COMMENT: IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER SHELEPIN WILL
ACTUALLY VISIT THE UK, BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE
STORM OF PROTEST WILL CONTINUE. UNLESS HE SWEEPS INTO
BRITAIN IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, SO TO SPEAK, AND SWEEPS
OUT AGAIN IN THE MANNER OF HIS RECENT VISIT TO GERMANY
AS A GUEST OF THE DGB, HE IS LIKELY TO BE GREETED BY
MORE THAN A FEW DEMONSTRATORS.

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